



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

**Former freelance Playboy Channel producer and hip hop magazine editor
among 11 charged in Ecstasy smuggling scheme**
Suspects told aspiring models who served as couriers they were carrying diamonds

LOS ANGELES – A former freelance television producer and the editor of an urban lifestyle magazine are two of the eleven suspects facing charges today in connection with a West Coast-based Ecstasy smuggling scheme uncovered by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Kenneth Cecil Francis, III, 37, who served as co-producer with rap artist Snoop Dogg of the Playboy Channel program “Buckwild” is expected to make his initial appearance in federal court in Los Angeles this afternoon. Francis was arrested by ICE agents Friday at Los Angeles International Airport when he and Snoop Dogg returned from a trip to Europe.

Also charged in the Ecstasy smuggling scheme is Ronald Joseph Samuel, 33, the editor in chief of “UNleashed Magazine,” an urban lifestyle publication popular in hip hop music circles. Samuel, who has been ordered held without bond, was arrested by ICE agents last week in Van Nuys. Samuel is suspected of overseeing the ring that used aspiring female models to smuggle hundreds of thousands of Ecstasy tablets from Europe into the United States in 2000 and 2001.

Francis and Samuel are among the 11 persons named in a five-count indictment unsealed last week charging them with conspiracy to import and distribute MDMA (Ecstasy), operating a continuing criminal enterprise, and money laundering.

According to the indictment, the female couriers made several trips every week to Brussels and Amsterdam where they were given gift-wrapped packages containing as many as 65,000 Ecstasy tablets to bring back to the United States. The ring’s leaders reportedly told some of the couriers the parcels contained smuggled diamonds.

“Before our agents uncovered this scheme, these suspects were smuggling significant quantities of Ecstasy into the Los Angeles area,” said Kevin Kozak, acting special agent in charge for the ICE office of investigations in Los Angeles. “These pills sell on the street for as much as \$60 a piece. That translates into huge profits that are often funneled back into further criminal activity. That is why ICE is determined to attack and dismantle these kinds of criminal enterprises.”

In addition to Francis and Samuel, ICE agents arrested seven other alleged members of the Ecstasy ring last week -- three in the Los Angeles area, one in Sacramento, and three in New York City.

The investigation began in 2001, when one of the ring's couriers was intercepted at JFK airport in New York after arriving on a flight from Amsterdam. The ensuing investigation revealed that the ring was importing and distributing Ecstasy both in the Los Angeles area and in New York. ICE agents say the investigation is ongoing.

Those named in the indictment are:

- Ronald Joseph Samuel, 33, who was arrested in Van Nuys Wednesday and has been ordered held without bond;
- Walter Crain Stocks, 41, who was arrested in Calabasas Wednesday and was ordered held without bond;
- Dustin Lenoid Bingham, 29, who was arrested in Hollywood Wednesday and was ordered held without bond;
- Christina Laygo Baker, 35, who was arrested in Sacramento Wednesday;
- Keven Lekar Huelett, who is currently a fugitive;
- Mervin Ethelbert Sealy, who was arrested in New York City Wednesday and was ordered held without bond;
- Joey Casul, who was arrested in New York City Wednesday and was later freed on a \$100,000 bond;
- Kenneth Cecil Francis, III, who was arrested Friday and is expected to appear in United States District Court in Los Angeles this afternoon;
- Robert Grey, who was arrested in New York City Wednesday and is being held without bond;
- John Doe, also known as "sizz"; and
- Lyndell Mishwan Anderson, 24, who was arrested in Van Nuys Friday, and was arraigned in federal court in Los Angeles this afternoon.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.